

## Chapter 6: Public Policy - The Third Prong



The third prong of the United Growth strategy is public policy. Some United Growth participants may have experience in this realm, but many may not feel comfortable talking with legislators and thinking on a policy level. However, it is a natural progression for United Growth to explore ways it can impact policies that affect land use decisions in the county. The following are suggestions on how to move into this public policy stag.

### Meet with Local Public Officials

From the beginning when the Rural and Urban Committees start tackling local land use issues, they should be encouraged to meet with their local officials - both those elected and those appointed. The Rural Committee should develop a relationship with township supervisors, clerks, and planning directors. The Urban Committee should develop a relationship with city commissioners, mayor, city



**Kent County’s Urban Committee met with former State Representative Bill Byl at a regular committee meeting in 2001.**

manager, and other city department heads. Both committees will want to know their county commissioners. Let your County Extension Director know when you are meeting with these officials. This will accomplish at least two things: gain more information on the issues and become better acquainted with the officials. The official may be invited to attend a committee meeting to discuss an issue, or a special meeting can be arranged.

Meeting with local officials will also help them become better acquainted with United Growth and your activities. You might want to present each official with a folder that contains materials you have produced (United Growth newsletter, brochure, etc.).

### Meet with Area Legislators

When the Urban and Rural Committees are ready, arrange meetings with their area legislators. This can be done individually or as a group. Here are some possible scenarios:

- Committee members meet with their legislators at a breakfast meeting at a local restaurant to talk about current land use issues of concern. Committee members must feel comfortable talking about their issues and be receptive to hearing what the legislators have to say. (Legislators usually like to meet Mondays or Fridays – the days designated for working in their districts.)
- A specific legislator, who is deemed “friendly”, is invited to a monthly committee meeting to discuss United Growth land use issues, and/or pending legislation that is of interest to the committee.
- Some legislators may hold regular, weekly office hours in the district. A United Growth delegation can go and meet with the legislators for a few minutes.

### **Organize a Legislative Committee**

Once some experience has been gained in meeting with public and elected officials, you will probably want to organize a Legislative Committee. This group will consist of representatives from both the Urban and Rural Committees. It is also an opportunity to involve additional people in United Growth activities by recruiting others. A chair and co-chair should be selected as soon as possible. The issues that are taken up by the committee can be assigned by the Rural and Urban Committees or Coalition, decided on by the committee itself, or a combination of the two. Here are some suggestions on how to get started:

- If there is a particularly hot land use issue happening in the state or county, the Legislative Committee can become informed. They could print the pros and cons of the issue and distribute it. They could take a stand on the issue. (If a stand is taken, this should come as a recommendation from the Legislative Committee to the Coalition. The Coalition will then vote it up or down.)
- The Legislative Committee can review the current, proposed legislation before the House and the Senate. The best reference is [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org). You may want to consider having committee members sign up for email notifications for meetings and agendas through this web site. The email notification service is only available for the House.
- Beth Moore, Extension Public Policy Specialist, offers an orientation to the Capitol. The entire Legislative Committee could participate in the orientation. (Contact Beth Moore for more information at [mooreeee@msu.edu](mailto:mooreeee@msu.edu).)
- Get to know your state legislators. Meet with them annually so that they know the Legislative Committee and committee members know their legislators. Make sure your committee members have a copy of the Citizen's guide to state government available through legislators' offices.



### **MSU Policies on Lobbying**

First of all, the Land Policy Educator should never be involved in lobbying activities. It makes it easier if this is the general rule that is widely known and followed. However, United Growth participants are under no restrictions. United Growth or the LPE should never support an individual candidate for public office through their professional role. What one does as a private citizen is up to the individual. See MSU's Policies on public policy education at the end of the chapter.

### **Impacting Pending Legislation**

The role of the Land Policy Educator should always be educational. The LPE can assist the Legislative Committee in researching an issue or pending legislation to determine its effect on your county. Publicizing this information is educational – especially if the pros and cons of the issues are explained.

The United Growth Coalition, or any of its committees, can support or oppose any issue or bills. In meetings with legislators, they can express their support or opposition. They can testify before legislative hearings, write letters to legislators advocating their position and encourage others to contact their legislators. These activities should be done without the involvement of the LPE. Extension letterhead should not be used for communication on behalf of the local UG Coalition. They should develop their own stationery and identity.

If the above activities constitute a significant percent of the Coalition's activities, the lobbying laws pertaining to non-profits should be followed.

It should also be noted that the Legislative Committee's efforts should be non-partisan. Meet with both Republican and Democratic law makers. Land use issues require the support of both political parties.

### **Examples of Legislative Committee Activities**

The following examples demonstrate the broad range of activities that can be undertaken by a Legislative Committee. Although the focus here is on impacting policy, you will notice that these activities also can have a capacity-building element for both United Growth and the individual Legislative Committee members. There is always an educational component to the activities.

*1. Bill Review.* One of the first major projects undertaken was an extensive review of a controversial bill that was supported by the United Growth Coalition. The bill encouraged cooperation among governmental jurisdictions. There was much misinformation circulating about the bill, which had stalled legislative action on it.

United Growth for Kent County Legislative Committee organized a diverse group to review the bill - page by page - to see where agreement and disagreements existed. The review committee had representatives from the following: home builders, neighborhood association, REALTOR, environmental group, local college, regional planning organization, etc. When someone disagreed with a section in the bill, the group discussed the point and offered alternatives. The amazing outcome was a document with which everyone in the group agreed. Our suggestions for changes and an outline of our process were communicated to area legislators.

*2. Organizing Support.* The Legislative Committee actively supported the bills that established the Michigan Housing & Community Development Fund. They first distributed information explaining the bills and how they will impact affordable housing in Kent County. An online network of local organizations and individuals supporting the bills was developed. A good working relationship with the Community & Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), the state organization coordinating much of the effort on these bills, was formed. When the bills started through the committee process, our local network generated over 100 communications to area legislators. Legislative Committee members testified at committee hearings on the bills in Lansing. The bills passed both the House and Senate and became law when the Governor signed them in December 2004.

3. *Issue Research.* One of the recommendations from the MI Land Use Leadership Council was the designation of Commerce Centers. There has not been much action on developing this concept. The Legislative Committee decided that their major goal for 2005 would be to research this concept and offer recommendations. The committee contacted state “experts” to gather their thoughts on Commerce Centers, studied SB 344 which identifies Commerce Centers sponsored by Senator Jason Allen, brainstormed what they would like to see in a Commerce Center, and did other related research. They are now in the process of putting their ideas into a position paper that will be circulated throughout the state as a way to galvanize action.

### **Supplemental Information**

The rest of the chapter consists of examples for Kent County that can be used as templates for your program. Please note that a lot of the information will be different for your county/region, but the basic framework of the materials should be useful.

# United Growth for Kent County's Legislative Committee

## Impact on the Affordable Housing Issue

Formation of the United Growth Coalition officially occurred in February 2004 when the Urban and Rural Committees came together. Although still under the MSU Extension umbrella, the Coalition re-structured as a membership-based organization.

The lack of affordable housing surfaced as an issue in both urban and rural areas of Kent County. The Legislative Committee of United Growth for Kent County chose the affordable housing bills that had been introduced into the state legislature as their primary focus for 2004. The bills (H.B. 4787 & 4788) would establish the Michigan Housing & Community Development Fund – a needed tool for funding of affordable housing activities.

United Growth's Legislative Committee developed a several prong educational strategy:

- created informational materials that explained the affordable housing crisis in Michigan and the content of the bills; provided periodic informational e-mails on the status of the bills,
- met with area legislators to learn more about the bills and share above materials (Rep. Kooiman and Senator Birkholz were major sponsors of the bills),
- contacted area organizations and business leaders who are interested in affordable housing to share informational materials and began developing a relationship/network with them so future activities could be coordinated,
- developed a working relationship with the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) and its executive director Tony Lentych, who coordinated activity on the bills among the Senate, House, and Governor's office,
- authored several articles that explained the affordable housing crisis in Grand Rapids and the purpose of the bills.

Members of the Legislative Committee learned with the rest of the community about affordable housing needs. Over 7,000 families were waiting for subsidized housing in Grand Rapids in 2003. Grand Rapids Public Schools identified 1,115 homeless students attending their schools as of May 2004. Michigan ranks 48<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in state and local government spending on housing, according to *Governing* magazine. Over 41,000 households in Michigan live in sub-standard housing. The proposed Fund would address these and other consequences of the lack of affordable housing in our city, county, and state.

In addition to the social justice aspects of affordable housing, the committee chose to focus on the economic development impact of the issue. There is a growing mismatch between what employees are earning and the cost of housing. For example, between 1990 and 2000, the median value of owner-occupied housing in Michigan increased by 92.3%, while median household incomes increased by only 44% - so the cost of housing is increasing at twice the rate of wages! Some are calling this a "workforce housing" problem. In order to find suitable housing, employees are being forced to live farther away from their place of employment, thereby

increasing commuting times, traffic congestion, air pollution, and instability both at home and in the workplace.

As a result of the committee's efforts, over 100 letters were generated by the network to legislators. Committee members provided testimony at the House and Senate hearings on the bills. Even though the conventional wisdom was that these bills would not be acted upon by this lame duck session, they were passed by both the House and Senate by wide margins in December 2004. Rep. Kooiman was able to obtain \$2 million in TANF funds to provide the initial funding. Similar bills had been introduced into the Legislature since the 1980's.

# Michigan Housing & Community Development Fund

## What Is It?

- The Fund will provide incentives to housing developers to build units for low income residents and will provide housing-related assistance to low income individuals, such as paying a security deposit.
- The Fund will increase the production of affordable housing in Michigan.
  - the Fund would support the annual development of 1,000+ housing units and assist 1,500 households with special needs
- Identical bills that establish the Fund and operationalize it have been introduced in both the House and the Senate.

## Why Is It Needed?

- Over 41,000 households in Michigan live in sub-standard housing.
- The lack of affordable housing has meant an increase in the number of homeless people. On a typical night in 2003, there were 800 people in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs *in Grand Rapids*. Of those using the shelters on any given night, 36% of them are children.
- In December 2003, there were more than 7,000 families on the Section 8 waiting list in Grand Rapids.
- Michigan ranks 48<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in state and local government spending on housing, according to Governing magazine.

## Who Will Use It?

- According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing is *affordable* if it costs 30 percent of a household's income or less. Almost 750,000 Michigan residents are living in housing that they cannot really afford.
- HUD reports that a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment – anywhere in the United States!
- This housing crisis affects households in the suburbs and in the townships throughout Kent County.

## Some Important Facts About Affordable Housing

The proposed Michigan Housing & Community Development Fund would help alleviate the affordable housing crisis that exists in Grand Rapids and throughout the State of Michigan.

### In Grand Rapids

- In 2003, **7,011 families were waiting for subsidized housing**, which is a 31.2% increase over the waiting lists in 2002.
- As of May 2004, **Grand Rapids Public Schools identified 1,115 homeless students** attending their schools. (*GRPS Homeless Students Program*)

### In Michigan

- Elderly households are twice as likely to experience housing need as non-elderly households. (*MI State Housing Development Authority*)
- In Michigan, **40% of renter households pay more than 30% of their income for rent.** (*National Low Income Housing Coalition/LIHIS*)
- Michigan ranks 48<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in state and local government spending on housing, according to *Governing* magazine.

### In the United States

- According to lender-established ratios, **a minimum wage earner (\$5.15 per hour) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$268.** (*National Low Income Housing Coalition/LIHIS*)
- **One out of every 7 American households has a critical housing need.** These families spend more than 50% of their income for housing and/or live in severely substandard conditions. Most alarmingly, **a growing proportion of these households were low to moderate-income families working full-time jobs.** (*Nation Housing Conference Report, Housing America's Working Families: A Further Exploration*)

## **MSU's Policy on Lobbying**

## Chapter 7: Funding – Developing a Sustainability Plan



With all MSU Extension community-based programs, it is important to continually work to secure partners and resources. These partners and resources serve many purposes, including:

- Demonstrating community support. Partnerships are foundational to our mission and philosophy.
- Helping to build your organizational capacity.
- Leveraging existing community resources.
- Reducing the potential for replication.
- Increasing the sustainability of the project/program.

At the same time that you are organizing the Rural and Urban Committees, also develop a funding plan.

The best possible funding base for a project or program is a diverse one. Contributions from private individual(s), businesses and foundation(s) as well as public support from local government(s), state, federal and/or university funding are all desirable. In-kind contributions and volunteer time are also important resources to secure and document. Fundraising activities should also be explored.

The MSU Land Policy Program has secured three years of funding to provide partial support for your salary, benefits, programming, travel, office equipment and supplies. Talk with your CED and/or Regional Director to find out the status of your position's salary and benefits. You will want to keep apprised of how much has been secured and how much needs to be secured as you may be required to assist your CED/Regional Director in developing on-going funding for your position.

You will need to work with Mary Beth Lake, Associate Director of the Land Policy Program, ([lakemary@landpolicy.msu.edu](mailto:lakemary@landpolicy.msu.edu) or 517-432-8800, ext 104) to access the W. K. Kellogg grant funds for your programming, travel, office equipment and supplies. She is coordinating the LPE and United Growth parts of the Kellogg Grant.

We would encourage you to talk with your CED to set up the appropriate financial handling accounts through the county and/or your county MSU Extension office. This will enable you to deposit and issue payments for programs, supplies, workshops, etc.

### ***MSU Resources***

From day one, we are encouraging Land Policy Educators to access existing MSU resources for various purposes. For your convenience, we have compiled a list of several MSU resources as Appendix C.

These resources include: web-based publications, maps, and instructional materials, workshops, certification programs, student interns as well as grant and scholarship programs. Take advantage of the many resources that are available!

If you are looking for a faculty member(s) to conduct research in your community, the MSU Land Policy Program can connect you with MSU faculty. Contact the Research Coordinator or Dr. Soji Adelaja at (517) 432- 8800 or [adelaja@landpolicy.msu.edu](mailto:adelaja@landpolicy.msu.edu).

Another resource that may be available is funding support from your County Extension Director (CED). Your CED may be willing to provide you with travel support to trainings, workshops or conferences as well as small amounts for programming. Your W.K. Kellogg funding through the MSU Land Policy Program should be spent before requesting additional funding from your CED.

Your MSU Extension Regional Office occasionally allocates funding, primarily to support salary and benefit expenses, for Educators. There is usually an application and approval process. For more information, talk with your CED or Regional Director. Due to the fact that MSU Extension regions and county offices are facing budget cuts and deficits, we would encourage you to request and/or secure external resources before making a request to your region. Occasionally funding is available for projects or program development through Area of Expertise teams (Land Use, Community Development, Economic Development, etc. or the Urban Collaborators by a application or request.

## ***External Funding Sources***

### **Foundations and Grant Programs**

Consider writing a proposal when the Urban Committee, Rural Committee and/or Coalition wants to undertake a specific project/activity. Include a percentage of your salary and benefits in the budget. We have also compiled lists of external funding sources and their programs and priorities for land use projects and programs. A list of foundations that support land use including websites and contact information can be found in Appendix E.

A list of state and federal grant programs and technical resources for land use can be found in Appendix F. If you are only securing technical assistance and no actual grant dollars, you probably will only have to have your proposal reviewed by your CED and/or Regional Director and won't have to go through Contracts and Grants or your office manager.

Michigan State University is a tax exempt 501(c)3 organization. **MSU's tax exempt number is: 38-6005984.** You may need to give this number to vendors when ordering supplies, contracting services, submitting grant proposals, etc. Your CED or office manager should have copies of MSU's non-profit documentation. MSU's financial report and audit, sometimes needed for proposals, can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.ctr.msu.edu/fstatement/>

Your county MSU Extension office may also use your county's tax exempt number. Talk with your CED or office manager for that number and when to use it. You do not have to pay sales tax on any purchases.

***You need to talk with your CED and Regional Director before submitting a grant proposal to any external foundations, businesses or organizations.*** This ensures that all University procedures are followed and multiple departments aren't unknowingly competing for the same funding. To help you understand the University process and procedures that must be followed, we have included at the back of this chapter a list of steps MSU Extension's former West Central Region's staff compiled. This may be adapted for other regions, but it gives you an idea of what is involved.

If you have never written a grant proposal before or feel you need to brush up on your skills, MSU Libraries provides proposal writing trainings and has an extensive list of written materials on their web site at [www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/grants.htm](http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/grants.htm)

Also look into classes in your community through United Way, the Chamber of Commerce or other organizations. Your CED and/or Regional director may be aware of grant writing trainings in your area.

If you and your committees, CED and/or Regional Director, decide to submit a grant proposal you will need to carefully follow the proper procedures. This procedure involves determining if you will want the grant's fiduciary to be Michigan State University or your County/MSU Extension office. There are pros and cons to each. The table below lists some of the pros and cons based on our experience. Not everyone may agree with this list.

<b>MSU as the Fiduciary PROS</b>	<b>MSU as the Fiduciary CONS</b>	<b>County/MSUE office as the Fiduciary PROS</b>	<b>County/MSUE office as the Fiduciary CONS</b>
MSU Contracts and Grants Dept handles the auditing and official bookkeeping for the grant. Your Regional Director is usually the P.I. and Regional office support staff have access to the account information.	26% non-campus overhead rate. This can dramatically decrease the size of your grant. Some foundations limit the overhead rate they will accept or do not accept overhead at all. Contact Contracts and Grants for more information	No or smaller over head rate. Talk with your CED or office manager to find out if your county charges an overhead rate.	Some counties/MSU Extension offices may limit grants to a certain dollar amount that they will manage. (They may require grants over a certain dollar amount to go through MSU.)
Contracts and Grants sets up a specific account through MSU for the grant, which you may then have a pro card (similar to a credit card with limited purchasing power) to use for expenses.	Filling out the paperwork. In our experience, the paperwork MSU requires for grants is more time consuming than from the county.	In our experience, the process to submit the proposal and spend the grant seems easier through the county/MSU Extension office, particularly for smaller grants (\$5,000 and under).	Grant requests often times must be approved by the Board of Commissioners before being submitted.
Funders often feel secure when making grants through MSU because they know the University manages money wisely.	Getting checks cut is a slow process often taking 3 or more weeks.	Cutting checks is a fast process.	No pro card for expenses. All must be paid by check.
MSU is responsible for auditing and contract compliance	Some times Contracts and Grants (CGA) sends communications to funders without notification to you. This often happens at the close of a grant. CGA will send money back to the funder and will close the account if you don't stay on top of things.		You will want to be sensitive to the amount of time managing your grant will take your office manager (if you have an office manager that can do this). If your county MSU Extension office doesn't have the capacity to take this on, it is better to go through MSU.

## **Sponsorships and Donations**

Local businesses and individuals can be wonderful resources. Often businesses and individuals who support sound land use will donate services, supplies, meals, etc. for public events and workshops. Don't be afraid to solicit these contributions. Enlist your committee members and their contacts. It works best to have a committee member who knows the business or individual to make the request and then have you follow up with the details.

Soliciting sponsorships and donations is also a way to leverage additional funds. It demonstrates the support you are generating for United Growth. Banks will often co-sponsor events that are urban focused so that they can obtain Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) credit. It would be helpful to have a banker on your Urban Committee.

Having access to a checking account through your MSU Extension office for donations is a user friendly option. You may also be able to use a checking account through your regional office if your county MSUE office doesn't have one available for use. Grant accounts through Contracts and Grants would rather not handle the smaller amounts of money contributed through these venues.

## **Fee for Service**

MSU Extension recently released new procedures on fee-for-services, called PREF. These requirements apply to all events where a registration fee is collected. This includes Land Use AoE Team programs and Citizen Planner as well as others.

## **In-Kind**

In-kind contributions usually consist of volunteer(s) time. Some organizations keep track volunteers hours contributed to a project and estimate the dollar value based on an accepted hourly. Kent / MSU Extension averages its volunteer hourly rate at \$15 per hour based on a federally accepted rate. If you are sponsoring an event or are completing a project, you will want to keep track of the volunteer hours contributed. You will be asked for the number of hours in your EIS report and it is good information to submit to the WKK Foundation as well as other funders.

Sometimes an organization will make an in-kind contribution of printing or some other service. These are also important to obtain and may be exchanged for a membership or sponsorship of an activity.

## **Moving Toward a Membership Organization**

When the Coalition is meeting on a monthly basis, you will want the PMT to consider whether the group should start soliciting membership dues for United Growth. If the PMT likes the idea, it should be taken to the Coalition for approval.

United Growth for Kent County became a membership organization in the spring of 2004 in a effort to build a more sustainable funding source and demonstrate commitment by its members. The 2005-06 membership form is attached in Appendix G as a sample for your use. The form is posted on the web site and is included as the last page in our quarterly newsletter. United Growth for Kent County decided its membership dues would be \$25 for individuals, \$100 for Bronze,

\$250 for Silver and \$500 and up for Gold. These funds are deposited in United Growth's account held by Kent/MSU Extension and the funds are controlled by the Project Management Team.

It is a good idea for the PMT to set a goal for the number of members the group should work to secure for the year. Members are in charge of recruitment, but staff can assist. We suggest having a beginning and ending date for all membership terms to simplify the renewal and payment process. For example, United Growth for Kent County's membership term for all members is May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

### **Funding as a Capacity-Building Activity**

You should not develop a funding plan by yourself. By involving United Growth participants at the beginning of fund development plans, the sustainability of the project is enhanced and the skills and interest of your leaders are built. Here are specific ways to engage members in funding:

- Have the PMT develop the annual budget.
- When planning an event/activity have the committee develop a budget, identify and recruit a business/individual sponsor and present a financial as well as program report to the Coalition.
- Both the Rural and Urban Committees should generate program ideas that are fundable.
- Ask each participant to recruit one new United Growth member.

### **Long Term Funding**

In three years when the Kellogg grant ends, your position must be funded entirely by other sources. Encourage as much Extension funding of your position as possible by talking with CED and Regional Director and local elected partners such as count commissioners. Due to continued budget reductions within MSUE, it appears that MSUE funding will be limited. You will, therefore, always want to be seeking additional sources of funding. Hopefully, you will be able to involve others in your funding search, but in the end, it will be your local team's responsibility to secure continued funding for this position.

### **Supplemental Information**

The rest of the chapter consists of examples for Kent County that can be used as templates for your program. Please note that a lot of the information will be different for your county/region, but the basic framework of the materials should be useful.

# Steps to Submitting a Grant Proposal Through Michigan State University

(Developed for the former MSU Extension West Central Region)

1. Fax RFP to Contracts and Grants for review at (517) 353-9812. You may also want to fax or email the Development Officer for ANR with the RFP and a brief description of your proposal.
2. Obtain documentation from funding organization if they do not accept overhead charges from Michigan State University. Attach documentation in the proposal and note it in the cover letter to Contracts and Grants. If the foundation does accept overhead charges, be sure to include the 26% off-campus overhead in the proposal budget. (Check Contracts and Grants web site at [http://www.cga.msu.edu/oh\\_memo.asp](http://www.cga.msu.edu/oh_memo.asp) for changes in overhead rates.)
3. Complete a transmittal form for every proposal. The transmittal form can be downloaded at <http://www.cga.msu.edu/default.asp?cont=trans>
4. Ideally, the proposal, transmittal form and grant cover sheet should be sent to the following persons for signature at least two weeks before the deadline:
  - a. Regional Director
  - b. Director of MSU Extension
  - c. Dean of ANR
  - d. Contracts and Grants Administrator (Kathi Killian, for foundation funding or Randy Sheets, local government funding) Fred Salas is the official signature of MSU on proposals and grant agreements.
  - e. Attach a routing request and a cover sheet with instruction for handling and an extra copy of the proposal for MSUE Director or Dean. Be sure to request original grant cover sheet to attach to the proposal and a copy of the signed transmittal for you files to be returned to you.

If you do not have enough time to send the proposal and forms around for signature, submit the proposal without official university approval and tell the funder in your cover letter that a grant cover sheet with official university approval will be sent at a later date. If the university does not give clearance for the proposal to be submitted, call the funder and withdraw your request.

5. If the request is over \$20,000, email Lucille Fallon with University Development to request her approval and clearance to submit the proposal. She must forward her approval to Contracts and Grants. Be sure to copy the Regional Director, Director of MSUE and Sue Woodard on your email.
6. If you receive funding, forward the check to the MSU Contracts and Grants Administrator who will deposit the check and email you an account number. If you have a revised budget for the grant, forward a copy to the funder and to the grant administrator. If your grant period has changed from what was stated on the transmittal form, you must complete a revised transmittal form and obtain the necessary signatures.

# Tips for Writing a Grant Proposal

Preparation is the most important step and the most time intensive.

## 1. Define the project:

- Who will do the work? Why are they the most qualified? Are others doing similar work? How is your approach unique? Why should it be funded instead of others or how are you working with others? Collaboration is ALWAYS better than isolation.
- What is the project? What are your goals? What problem are you addressing? What specific outcomes will result and why is this important?
- Where will it take place?
- How long will it take? Need a time line and benchmarks.
- How will you accomplish your goals?
- How will you evaluate the results?

Some resources that you may be interested in:

*Guide to Proposal Writing* (1997). Edited by J.C. Geever and P. McNeil. The Foundation Center.

*Proposal Planning and Writing* (1998). Edited by L.E. Miner, J.T. Miner and J. Griffith. ORYX Press.

## 2. Identify the right funding sources:

- Is the project consistent with the funder's mission? Have they funded similar projects?
- Try to call or meet with staff and pitch your project before submitting a proposal. Work on building relationships with staff and board members.
- It's okay to submit the same project to more than one funder. It's not a good idea to put all your eggs in one basket.
- Make sure to document and explain the contributions and in-kind donations you have received.
- The Michigan Foundation Directory is a great resource. Available through the Council of Michigan Foundations [www.cmif.org](http://www.cmif.org)
- The Foundation Center [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)
- MSU Libraries: [www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/grants.htm](http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/grants.htm)

## 3. Writing the proposal:

- Make sure to follow the proposal guidelines and all directions.
- Turn the proposal in before the deadline. You won't be funded otherwise.
- Write concisely and professionally.
- Use headings and subheadings.
- Have someone who doesn't know a thing about your organization review your proposal.

## Chapter 8: Outreach/Communication



One of the most difficult tasks you may face as a Land Policy Educator (LPE) is balancing your roles as an educator, project manager, volunteer recruiter/coordinator and project administrator. There is no set formula for accomplishing this balance. LPEs need to be effective time managers by prioritizing tasks, sticking to the goals of the project and your job description, delegating and being able to say “no” once and a while.

This information is provided to help you learn some of the short-cuts for administering a United Growth project.

### Creating a Database

One of the first things you should be working on when you are hired is creating a database of contacts. A database using Microsoft Access is a very valuable tool. If you are not familiar with that program, an alternative is an Excel spreadsheet of contact information.

Access is the chosen database software because you can sort and create mailing lists by many different types. If you only wanted to do a mailing to Planning Commissioners, you can sort by Planning Commissioners using the Query function and then do a Mail Merge to create letters or mailing labels in Word.

Access is not easy to pick up on your own. If you are not familiar with Access, you may want to consider taking a class on Access on campus or in your community, however, we do not recommend you wait to create a database, just start it in Excel and down the road you can convert it to Access if you desire.

Categories we suggest for your database are as follows:

- Mail Name (Example: Mr. John Smith Jr.)
- First Name (for search purposes)
- Last Name (for search purposes)
- Title
- Organization/Business
- Address1
- Address2
- City
- State
- Zip Code (at this time we do not recommend adding the 4 digit extension if you are using Access as it often prints without the hyphen)
- Work Phone
- Mobile Phone
- Home Phone
- Fax
- Email
- Web Site
- Date Updated

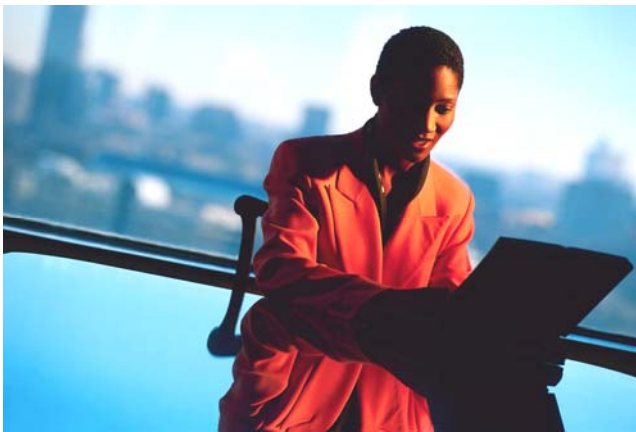
We also recommend creating check boxes in Access or column headings in Excel and marking an “X” or “yes” in the column for the following categories:

- Rural Committee
- Urban Committee
- Newsletter Mailing List
- Planning Commissioner/ZBA
- Elected Official
- Media
- Feel free to add additional categories that you think you would need to sort by to create mailings.

### **Acquiring Database Information and Mailings**

To acquire information for your database, you will want to talk with your CED about getting a county directory which usually lists all city, village and township elected officials and staff in the county.

We recommend sitting down with your CED and creating a list of organizations currently working on land use issues (broadly defined) in your county. After this list is generated, look up



the mailing information in the phone book or using the Internet. You can do a Google search or perhaps use an on-line directory such as [www.411.com](http://www.411.com). Another resource for database information is the regional planning commission.

A good way to get a response from Planning Commissioners and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members is to mail information directly to their home. The most effective way to get mailing lists of Planning

Commissioners is to directly contact the local units of government. Sometimes they are hesitant to give out this information, but explain that it will not be distributed and will only be used to send them information related to educational opportunities and events.

If you are not able to obtain mailing lists for Planning Commissioners, mail a packet of 15 copies of the mailing to the Clerk along with a letter requesting that they distribute this information to Planning Commissioners and ZBA members. If this is information that members of the public may be interested in, include an additional 10 – 20 copies in the mailing to the Clerk and request that these copies be placed in their lobby. This strategy is also recommended for use with Neighborhood Association offices since members of the public frequently stop by. And don't forget to display information in the Extension office's lobby!

Building and maintaining the database is an on-going process. You will want to stay on top of this task to make sure mailings are getting in the right hands and postage isn't wasted. Since many counties don't have a ***Directory of Land Use Organizations***, think about providing this service once a list is generated. Talk with your United Growth committees to determine if this is a

worthwhile project and seek their ideas for distribution methods. You may want to seek permission from organizations to be included in a printed directory. This can be an effective strategy for communicating the project's goals and obtaining partners/members to sit on committees or be listed on the letterhead.

You will also want to create a back-up of the directory. The MSU Extension Portal system provides an effective way of backing up the database on the campus server. Load it as an internal file that only you can access. Don't post the database on the public portion of the web site. Remind yourself to update the back-up file every six months or so.

### **Developing an Outreach/Communications Strategy**

With the implementation of a database and plans for projects and programs, take time to develop an outreach/communications strategy. Using the United Growth strategies of education and capacity building, the most effective methods of developing a communications strategy for the United Growth project is to do so at a Project Management Team meeting, Joint Committee/Coalition meeting or through a sub-committee made up of Rural and Urban Committee members.

In the beginning it is easiest to develop a strategy for an individual project or program and follow the step-by-step procedure outlined in Appendix H. (Adapted from the People and Land Grantee Communications Kit, 2002.)

### **Outreach and Communications Tools**

The following is a list of tools that United Growth for Kent County has used. When developing your Outreach/Communications Strategy, you should consider which tool is appropriate. Samples can be found in Appendix I. Work with your committee members to develop these tools.

- **Brochure:** A tri-fold brochure is a valuable asset to any program. Be sure to include pictures as well as the United Growth logo, contact information including an email and web site address. If you don't have time or money to spend on a professionally printed or designed brochure, you may want to use an existing template in Microsoft Publisher. We encourage the development of several brochures and informational pieces varying by topic, program and event as well as a general United Growth project brochure. A sample is included at the back of this chapter. Tips on developing brochures are included in Appendix I.
- **Newsletter:** A newsletter is an effective way of distributing information on your project, issues, and events. If time and money are an issue, and most of your contacts have email addresses, you may want to consider an electronic newsletter. Templates for electronic or hard copy editions are available through Microsoft Publisher.

If you decide to do an e-version, we recommend you either post all the articles (brief) in the body of the email, or list a short description of the article and a link to PDF that you have posted on your web site or as an attachment to the email. We have found that if you just email out a link or an attachment, not many people will read it.

Check out United Growth for Kent County's quarterly newsletter, The Urban-Rural Connection at the back of this chapter. Additional editions can be found on the web site accessible through the United Growth for Kent County link posted at [www.msue.msu.edu/kent](http://www.msue.msu.edu/kent). Work with your Extension office to see if you can get a regular column dedicated to the United Growth project in the county newsletter and make sure that is distributed to your database list.

- **Web Site:** The new MSU Extension portal system provides a great way to get a page posted on your county United Growth project quickly and with fairly simple maintenance. Check out United Growth for Kent County's portal web page accessible through the link at [www.msue.msu.edu/kent](http://www.msue.msu.edu/kent).

We believe the effort to create and maintain a United Growth web site for your county is well worth it. We have found the following advantages:

- helps create a United Growth identity and awareness of the project
  - minutes of committee meetings can be posted and then easily accessed by committee members as well as by others
  - research produced by the project can be posted and archived (a local university professor gives his land use students United Growth's web address.)
- **Email Lists:** As an LPE, you are going to need to set up email address lists. We use Eudora software, but Outlook is an option. You will want to create lists for the Rural Committee and Urban Committee as well as individuals. (Make sure you obtain email addresses for all of your committee members and others as well as their snail mail information.)
  - **Listserv:** If you want to be able to distribute information on programs, events and perhaps your newsletter to a long list of people, look into setting up a listserv. United Growth for Kent County has a listserv of over 700 people. We do not allow anyone other than ourselves to post information on the listserv because we already have several local land use related listservs where members can post information and we did not want to have to be responsible for the content of what others may post. We use it as a tool to email information to a large number of people with a click of a button. Before you decide to do this, think about maintaining the list. This can take a couple of hours every month because email addresses change frequently. To set up a listserv through MSU, contact Margaret King, Systems Programmer at the Computer Laboratory at [makmaint@msu.edu](mailto:makmaint@msu.edu).

#### Directions for Saving All MSU Extension Employee Email Addresses in Eudora

This is an effective way of being able to email MSUE staff without having to look up email addresses.

1. Right click on Eudora Nicknames and select "save Target As" or "Save Link As" depending on which browser you are currently using.
2. Save ceenet.txt to your desktop.
3. Once the ceenet.txt has been copied to your desktop, right click on the file and select copy.
4. Open Windows Explorer. Select C, Select Program Files, Select Qualcomm, Select Eudora. There is a folder under Eudora called Nicknames.
5. There should be three related files listed here (ceenet.txt, ceenet.toc, ceenet.bak). Delete ceenet.txt and ceenet.toc. Use <ctrl>V to paste the new file here. The file has now been copied from desktop to Nicknames folder. Exit out of Explorer and restart Eudora.
6. The updated nicknames should now be there. Test it by creating a new message and then typing the last name of an MSUE staff person. If the person's name fills in or a drop down menu appears it is correct. You will want to conduct this exercise once or twice a year to make sure to have up-to-date information.

An Outlook version will be available soon. Check with ANR Communications for assistance.

- **Business cards and name badge:** Land Policy Educators will want to order business cards and a name badge as soon as possible. You will want to reference yourself as a United Growth Project Coordinator in addition to a Land Policy Educator. Talk with your CED or office administrator about placing an order. Your CED or office administrator can also help you order name badges..
- **Power Point Presentations:** Be sure to include the MSU Extension and United Growth logos on your Power Point slides for consistency and branding. Use lots of photos in your presentations. Always include contact information and web site.
- **Letterhead:** You will be provided with a letterhead template for your use. We have used the letterhead as a way of communicating the diverse number of groups involved in the project. This lends to the credibility, strength and comprehensiveness of the effort. We also recognize our funders. Consider ordering watermark paper with MSU seal from campus as it looks more professional. We print our letterhead on our color printer in house.
- **Pictures:** We always are looking for pictures to market United Growth. Consider spending some of your operating budget on a good digital camera. You will want interesting pictures for:
  - newsletter
  - brochures
  - web site
  - PowerPoint presentations
  - annual report

Don't forget to bring your camera to all United Growth meetings and events to capture the diversity of participants and activities. See if the title "photographer" can be bestowed on a United Growth participant.

### **Supplemental Information**

The rest of the chapter consists of examples for Kent County that can be used as templates for your program. Please note that a lot of the information will be different for your county/region, but the basic framework of the materials should be useful.

Thank you to our current  
2005-06 members!

**Individual**

James R. Buck  
City of Grandville Mayor  
Michael Cary  
Grand Rapids Housing Board of Appeals  
Tom Cary  
West MI Environmental Action Council  
Rick Chapla  
The Right Place, Inc.  
Brian Clinger  
Westdale Co.  
Stuart and Nancy Cok  
Pleasantree Farm  
Dennis Cole  
Prein & Newhof  
Rod Denning  
GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute  
Kate Dernocoeur  
Vergennes Twp Open Space Committee  
Jim Ferro  
Ada Twp Planning Director  
Paul Haan  
Rev. George Heartwell  
City of Grand Rapids Mayor  
Gail Heffner  
Calvin College  
Denny Heffron  
Heffron Farms  
James D. Kozal  
Harold Mast  
Genesis Non-Profit Housing Corporation  
Tom McWhertor  
Calvin College  
David Medema  
Medema Consulting  
Marilynn Momber  
Michigan Farmers Union  
Tom Mort  
City of Grand Rapids  
Penelope Pestle  
Potential: Community Systems Change  
Cynthia Price  
GGR Food Systems Council  
Herb Ranta  
Bonnie Robinson  
Sparta Township  
Laurin Waldecker  
Marsha Wilcox  
Vergennes Twp Open Space Committee

**Gold**

Alpine Township

**Silver**

Ada Township  
DuRay Development LLC

**Bronze**

Aquinas College  
Calvin College  
Cannon Township  
City of Wyoming Clean Water Plant  
Dyer-Ives Foundation  
Fair Housing Center of GGR  
Gaines Charter Township  
Jay and Laura Hoekstra  
Kent County Farm Bureau  
Michigan Land Use Institute  
Lowell Charter Township  
The Rapid  
Sparta Township  
Vergennes Township  
City of Walker  
Wege Foundation  
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United Growth for Kent County is a Michigan State University Extension project.  
*The mission of the United Growth Coalition is to serve as a sustainable, citizen-based organization that unites people and organizations around the promotion of positive land use in Kent County and West Michigan.*

This page reserved for  
a sample of a general brochure  
The chapter says one will be here.

This page reserved for  
“The Urban-Rural Connection”  
See Green tab in book

Is this your newsletter?  
If not we need to put your newsletter in somewhere